

Servants Prep

An Overview on the Book of Acts

September 23, 2023

Date of Writing

The book of Acts was likely written between AD 61 and 64.

Introduction

- St. Luke who wrote the Gospel of St. Luke (first book) , he also wrote the book of Acts (the second book)
- The first book was regarding the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, while the second was regarding the life of the church
- Both were covering close periods of time. The first book covered 33 years (the life of our Lord on earth), while the second covered 30 years after the Lord Ascension to Heavens.
- The Book of Acts covers from the Ascension to the prison of St. Paul in Rome. This covers the life of the first church in the first century

Chapters and Contents

- Chapter 1: The ascension and Matthias
- Chapter 2: The descendant of the Holy Spirit (day of Pentecost) and the Sermon of St. Peter and 3000 souls were added to the church
- Chapters 3 & 4: The first miracle: The lame man from his womb at the gate of the temple (called beautiful). Peter and Paul were put in custody
- Chapter 5: Ananias and Sapphira
- Chapter 6 & 7: St. Stephen, the first martyr
- Chapter 8: St. Philip, the second man of the seven deacons
- Chapter 9: The Lord calling Saul.
- Chapters 10 & 11: Cornelius
- Chapter 12: the martyrdom of St. James the brother of John.

The four saints covered above: Stephen, Philip, Paul, and Cornelius in addition to the disciples Peter and James

- Chapters 13-20: the three journey of St. Paul
 - From chapters 13-14 First journey
 - Chapter 15: The first ecumenical counsel in Jerusalem regarding the problem of Judaization (to be converted to Jewish before being Christian)
 - Chapters 16, 17, & 18 the second journey
 - Chapters 19 & 20, the third Journey
- Chapter 21-28: Prisons of St. Paul

Chapters and Contents in Events

- Chapter 1: Between the ascension and the descendant of the Holy Spirit
- Chapter 2 to 7: The church in Jerusalem
- Chapter 8-12: The Church in Judea and Samaria
- Chapters 13-20: The three missionary Journeys of St. Paul
- Chapter 21-28: judgments, prisons until martyrdom in Rome.

Who are the Audience of this book

All Churches every where at all times.

Observations

- About half of the book was covering St. Paul's service
- St. Luke served with St. Paul, therefore events listed in the book of acts from being a companion to St. Paul in his trips
- Much of St. Paul's letters were referenced in his second and third journeys.
- The Book of Acts is not ending by the word "Amen" since we are still living in the acts of the Fathers and miracles occur every day
- In reading the Praxis (Book of Acts) in the church, we conclude, "the word of the Lord shall grow, confirm, and multiply in the church of God Amen". This means the the Holy Spirit will continue the work that was covered in the book of Acts in the church forever.

What Do We Learn from the study of the Book of Acts

- We learn about the extension to the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Even though it was the acts of the apostles, but it is by the power of the Holy Spirit who is in the Holy Trinity.
- We learn how do we serve, preach, and shepherd the flock.
- We have faith in the power of the Holy Spirit and His work in us and in the church
- The work of the Holy Spirit requires what we follow our apostles: in praying fervently, dwelling in the brotherly love, and life of humility
- The Book of Acts is considered the first reference to the doctrine, fasting, sacraments, liturgies, and priesthood.

Purpose of Writing the Book

In addition to what we learn from the Book of Acts, here are some purposes for the study of the book:

- The book of Acts was written to provide a history of the early church.
- The book of Acts records the apostles being Christ's witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the surrounding world.
- The book of Acts sheds light on the gift of the Holy Spirit, who empowers, guides, teaches, and serves as our Counselor.
- Reading the book of Acts, we are enlightened and encouraged by the power of the gospel as it spread throughout the world and transformed lives. Many miracles were performed during this time by the apostles to validate their message.
- The book of Acts covers the transitional time between the ascension of Christ and the completion of the New Testament canon, and the apostolic miracles were God's means of documenting His message through the men who wrote the Bible.

Few Coverage in the Church in Jerusalem , Judea, and Samaria

- In Jerusalem
 - The disciples prayers in the alter, breaking the bread, meetings in houses,
 - The miracle of Peter and John in the Alter and their arrest
 - The first martyr St. Stephen, followed by the spread of the church outside Jerusalem
- In Judea and Samaria
 - The church changed from a small group in Jerusalem with majority from jews into a big family from all nations
- Before Paul was converted, Paul zealously persecuted Christians. Paul's dramatic conversion on the [Damascus road \(Acts 9:1–31\)](#) is a highlight of the book of Acts. After his conversion he went to the opposite extreme of loving God and preaching His Word with power and fervency in the Spirit of the true and living God.
- The disciples were empowered by the Holy Spirit to be His witnesses in Jerusalem ([Acts 1—8:3](#)), in Judea and Samaria (8:4—12:25), and to the ends of the earth (13:1—28:31). Included in the last section are Paul's three missionary journeys (13:1—21:16), his trials in Jerusalem and Caesarea (21:17—26:32) and his journey to Rome (27:1—28:31).

Key Verses in the Book of Acts:

- **Power of the Holy Spirit**

[Acts 1:8](#): “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

[Acts 2:4](#): “All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.”

[Acts 4:19–20](#): “But Peter and John replied, ‘Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God’s sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.’”

(this was meant to be the voice of the Holy Spirit and the Acts of the Holy Spirit)

- **Salvation**

[Acts 4:12](#): “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”

[Acts 16:31](#): “So they said, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved.’”

- **Call of Saul to be Apostle Paul**

[Acts 9:3–6](#): “As [Saul] neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?’ ‘Who are you, Lord?’ Saul asked. ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,’ he replied. ‘Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.’”

(here is a lesson: get up and go into the church and you will be told what you must do)

Connections to Other Books:

- The book of Acts serves as a transition from the Old Covenant to the New. This transition is seen in several key events in Acts.
 - **First, there was a change in the ministry of the Holy Spirit**, whose primary function in the Old Testament was the external “anointing” of God’s people, among them Moses ([Numbers 11:17](#)), Othniel ([Judges 3:8–10](#)), Gideon ([Judges 6:34](#)), and Saul ([1 Samuel 10:6–10](#)). After the ascension of Jesus, the Spirit came to live in the very hearts of believers ([Romans 8:9–11](#); [1 Corinthians 3:16](#)), guiding and empowering them from within. The indwelling Spirit is the gift of God to those who come to Him in faith.
 - **Paul’s conversion in [Acts 9](#) is a dramatic example of the power of God unto salvation (see [Romans 1:16](#)) and the opening of spiritually blinded eyes.** Paul admitted that, prior to meeting the risen Savior, he was the most zealous of Israelites and was blameless “concerning righteousness based on the law” ([Philippians 3:6](#)), going so far as to persecute those who taught salvation by grace through faith in Christ. But, after his conversion, Paul realized that all his legalistic efforts were worthless, and he considered them “rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith” ([Philippians 3:8–9](#)). Before he met Christ, Paul had been blinded by a pharisaical misinterpretation of the law and an inflated opinion of his own righteousness. **After he met Christ, the “scales fell from Saul’s eyes,” as it were ([Acts 9:18](#)), and he received his sight.** His boasting of his own goodness was replaced by his glorying in the cross of Jesus Christ ([Romans 3:27](#); [Galatians 6:14](#)).
 - **Peter’s vision of the sheet full of unclean animals in [Acts 10:9–15](#) is another sign of the transition from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant’s unity of Jew and Gentile in one universal Church.** The “unclean” animals in Peter’s vision symbolized the Gentiles, who were declared “cleansed” by God through the sacrificial death of Christ. The Old Covenant law had served its purpose (see [Galatians 3:23–29](#)), and both Jews and Gentiles are united in the New Covenant of grace through their faith in the death and resurrection of Christ.

Practical Application:

- God can do amazing things through ordinary people when He empowers them through His Spirit.
- The book of Acts shows how God essentially took a group of fisherman and commoners and used them to turn the world upside down ([Acts 17:6](#)). God took a Christian-hating murderer and transformed him into history's greatest Christian evangelist, the author of almost half the books of the New Testament.
- God used the persecution of the Christians endured to help stimulate the incredibly rapid expansion of the fledgling church.
- God can and does do the same through us—changing our hearts, empowering us by the Holy Spirit, and giving us a passion to spread the good news of salvation through Christ.
- If we try to accomplish God's work in the world in our own power, we will fail. Like the disciples in [Acts 2](#), we must faithfully proclaim the gospel, trust God for the results, and devote ourselves “to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer” ([Acts 2:42](#)).

Questions

1. Events in chapter 5 ?
2. Events in Chapter 1 ?
3. Events in chapter 6 ?
4. Events in chapter 15 ?
5. Events in chapter 27 ?
6. Spread of the church after the martyrdom of St.
7. St. Paul was martyred in the city of